

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-11 /073 W

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R 111415Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2750

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCO WUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1323

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY COUNCIL

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 05888 (DTG 041411Z FEB 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL WAS ANNOUNCED ON RADIO AND TELEVISION ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 9. THE DECREE PERMITS THE SELECTION OF THREE COUNCIL MEMBERS FROM EACH PARTY, SOLCIAL OR PROFESSIONAL GROUP TO SERVE ON THE COUNCIL. THE COUNCIL WILL INITIATE ITS ACTIVITIES ON JUNE 15, 1976 AND WILL REMAIN IN EXISTENCE UNTIL A NATIONAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY IS ELECTED. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL IS THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS THAT IS DESIGNED TO END IN A RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONALITY AND ELECTIONS IN 1979. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CONSULTATIONS CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR HAS BEEN HOLDING WITH VARIOUS POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS ENDED TEN DAYS AGO. AFTER THE CONSULTATIONS ENDED, A DRAFT DECREE DESIGNED TO SET UP THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WAS PRE-CONFIDENTIAL

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PARED AND PRESENTED TO THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL (SDC)

FOR STUDY. THE SDC REVIEWED AND MODIFIED THE DRAFT DURING A MEETING ON MARCH 4-6 PRIOR TO SENDING IT TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. THE CHIEF OF STATE AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS APPROVED THE DECREE ON MARCH 9; IT WAS BROADCAST ON RADIO AND TELEVISION THAT EVENING.

2. THE MAJOR PROVISIONS OF DECREE 327 FOLLOW:

(A) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL CONSIST OF THREE MEMBERS AND THREE ALTERNATES FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF, MEMBERS TO BE CHOSEN BY THE ARMED FORCES;
2. SUPREME COURT, MEMBERS CHOSEN BY SUPREME COURT JUSTICES;
3. ARMED FORCES;
4. NATIONALIST, LIBERAL, INNOVATION AND UNITY AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WILL SELECT OWN REPRESENTATIVES;
5. HONDURAN COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (COHEP), THE FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY GROUPS, FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION AND THE HONDURAN CONFEDERATION OF COOPERATIVES WILL SELECT REPRESENTATIVES IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY;
6. CONFEDERATION OF HONDURAN WORKERS (CTH) WILL SELECT REPRESENTATIVES IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH ALL FEDERATIONS IN ATTENDANCE;
7. ONE COUNCIL MEMBER AND ONE ALTERNATE EACH WILL BE SELECTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CAMPESINOS (ANACH), FEDERATION OF AGRARIAN REFORM COOPERATIVES (FECORAH) AND THE NATIONAL UNION OF CAMPESINOS (UNC);
8. ONE COUNCIL MEMBER AND ONE ALTERNATE EACH WILL BE SELECTED BY THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RECTOR AND DEANS OF THE DEPARTMENTS, THE TEACHERS AND THE FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (FEUH);
9. ONE COUNCIL MEMBER AND ONE ALTERNATE EACH WILL BE SELECTED BY MIDDLE LEVEL TEACHERS, PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE TECHNICIANS, AND NURSES AND SOCIAL WORKERS; AND
10. ONE COUNCIL MEMBER AND ONE ALTERNATE EACH WILL BE ELECTED BY THE PRESS MEDIA, PUBLICITY GROUPS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS.

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(B) THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS MUST BE GIVEN TO THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT BY MAY 20, 1976;

(C) THE CHIEF OF STATE WILL APPOINT THE COUNCIL MEMBER WHO WILL ACT AS PRESIDENT AND COORDINATOR BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STATE AND THE ADVISORY COUNCIL;

(D) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL INITIATE ITS ACTIVITIES ON JUNE 15, 1976 AND WILL OCCUPY THE OFFICES OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS;

(E) THE COUNCIL MEMBERS MAY CONTINUE IN THEIR PRESENT PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS, WILL ENJOY PERSONAL IMMUNITY AND WILL NOT BE PROSECUTED FOR ANY OPINIONS THEY EXPRESS IN THE COUNCIL; AND

(F) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL ISSUED ITS INTERNAL REGULATIONS, PROPOSE A DRAFT OF THE ELECTORAL LAW, EXPRESS ITS OPINION ABOUT MATTERS WHEN REQUESTED BY THE CHIEF OF STATE AND PRESENT THE CHIEF OF STATE WITH ITS OWN SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE SOLUTION OF NATIONAL PROBLEMS

3. BEGIN COMMENT: THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OFFERS THE VARIOUS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL GROUPS A CHANCE TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS RECEIVE A PUBLIC AIRING. ONE OF THE MAJOR AND CONTINUING CRITICISMS OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ITS UNWILLINGNESS OR INABILITY TO HAVE A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL WOULD PERMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH A DIALOGUE ON QUESTIONS OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE ADVISORY COUNCIL COULD ACT AS A "LITTLE CONGRESS", AND WILL BE ABLE TO SUGGEST POLICIES TO THE CHIEF OF STATE ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE. IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO MAKE AN ESTIMATE ABOUT HOW EFFECTIVE THE BODY WILL BE; HOWEVER, AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE, ITS DEVELOPMENT OFFERS HONDURAS THE HOPE THAT 1979 WILL SEE AN END TO MILITARY GOVERNMENT AND THE INAUGUATION OF A CIVILIAN REGIME. END COMMENT.  
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